THE Reconstructionist

Vol. IX. November 26, 1943 Heshvan 28, 5704 No. 15

EDITORIALS
- *A Sad Omission*
- *A Cogent But Incomplete Defense of Zionism*
- *Reductio Ad Absurdum*

A PEN PORTRAIT OF MOSES LOEB LILIENBLUM
By Grace Goldin

LILIENBLUM'S CONTRIBUTION TO JEWISH THOUGHT
By David Polish

THE HEBREW NAME AS A SURVIVAL FACTOR
By Alfred J. Kolatch

DISCUSSION IN THEOLOGY
By Ira Eisenstein

REALITIES AND VALUES

Dedicated to the advancement of Judaism as a religious civilization, to the upbuilding of Israel's ancient homeland, and to the furtherance of universal freedom, justice and peace.

the Reconstructionist

is published bi-weekly for twenty consecutive issues, starting in October, by the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation, Inc., 15 West 86th Street, New York 24, N. Y. Reentered as second class matter October 3, 1935, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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Dr. David Polish was formerly Director of Hillel Foundation at Cornell University, and is now Rabbi of Temple Israel in Waterbury, Connecticut. He is already familiar to readers of *The Reconstructionist* by several articles that he has contributed in the past.

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Grace Goldin is the wife of Rabbi Judah Goldin, instructor in Judaism in the Divinity School of Duke University, Durham, N. C. Like her husband, she has been a frequent contributor to *The Reconstructionist,* having written a number of biographical sketches of interesting Jewish personalities, like the one which appears in this issue.

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Rabbi Alfred J. Kolatch is one of our new contributors. He is now a chaplain with our armed forces and was formerly rabbi of Temple House of Peace, Columbia, S. C.

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EDITORIALS

A SAD OMISSION

ON the conclusion of the tri-power conference at Moscow, a joint statement was issued by the representatives of the three participating governments which gave warning that "At the time of granting of any armistice to any government which may be set up in Germany, those German officers and men and members of the Nazi party who have been responsible for or have taken a consenting part in the . . . atrocities, massacres and executions" of innocent people in occupied countries would be sent back to those countries where their crimes had been committed, there to be tried and punished "according to the laws of these liberated countries and of the free governments which will be erected there." Specific mention was made of invaded parts of the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Greece, Denmark, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, France and Italy. But what about atrocities committed against Jews, committed in Germany itself? As the first people singled out by the Nazis for persecution and the only people singled out for complete extermination, might there not have been a specific mention of them?

We cannot help speculating on the reasons for the omission of atrocities against the Jews as such from the list of crimes for which the Nazis will be held to account on the day of reckoning. Was it perhaps because the British government, which was represented at the Conference, might have found a specific reference to the tragic suffering of the Jewish people embarrassing? For the British government, in implementing the White Paper, is deliberately sabotaging the solution of that problem which it undertook to facilitate under a mandate from the League of Nations. It would certainly help save the face of Great Britain to make it appear that the extermination of the Jews of Warsaw, for example, was merely incidental to the German fury against the Poles.

Or perhaps the reason for the silence of the three Powers was due to the motivation of their threat of punishment. They may have wanted to strike terror into the hearts of the occupying forces as a deterrent to future atrocities. From this viewpoint it would be irrelevant whether the victims were Jews or Gentiles. That may account for the failure specifically to mention the persecution and extermination of Jews. But that does not justify the omission. The specific mention

of German atrocities against Jews would not have interfered with the deterrent purpose of the threat. But it would have served the additional purpose of discrediting anti-Semitism and thus striking a blow at the underground fascism which exists even in the democratic countries and which everywhere uses anti-Semitism as its most convenient weapon for securing power.

Whatever the motive of the omission may have been, therefore, the omission itself is deplorable. We are willing to accept the President's assurance, in response to an inquiry on the subject, that "the heart" of our government "is in the right place" on the question of the Jews. We never once doubted the heart of the President, or of the American people. But we earnestly hope that they clearly understand the nature of the Jewish problem. The problem of the Jews in Europe is a unique and distinctive one and not merely a fraction of the general problem of the populations in countries under Nazi domination. The Jewish problem existed before these countries were occupied by the Nazis and will exist after their governments are restored, unless specific remedies, including the establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine, be applied. The failure to recognize the specific character of the Jewish problem will leave that problem where it was before the war started. That means that anti-Semitism will be there as a convenient tool for any gangster government to exploit at any time, as Hitler exploited it, not only against the Jews but against the world.

We Jews must impress this upon the governments of the United Nations. That is our great responsibility at the present time. And we are severely hampered in carrying it out by those Jews who themselves profess to believe that the Jewish problem can be solved by merely granting to the Jews as individuals equal political rights with non-Jews in the post-war treaties. Such Jews are paving the way, unwittingly no doubt, for future pogroms and atrocities against Jews and for the use of anti-Semitism by fascist fifth columnists, wherever it becomes convenient so to use it.

A COGENT BUT INCOMPLETE DEFENSE OF ZIONISM

THE current agitation on the part of all defenders of Zionism to achieve the revocation of the White Paper has gained considerable impetus with the publication of Pierre Van Paassen's "The Forgotten Ally." In this passionate presentation of the Jewish case, the author offers the simple but devastating thesis that the imperialists of Great Britain, particularly those associated with the Colonial Office and the Palestine administration, have finally decided to destroy the whole Zionist project in order to maintain hegemony over the Empire. In a clear and forthright, and entirely courageous manner, Mr. Van Paassen accuses the British leaders of nullifying their promise of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine, and he appeals, above the heads of those leaders, to the people of Britain and of the world, and to their consciences.

The single purpose of imperialist policy, he says, is to keep the entire Arab world on the level of a rural civilization. Industrialization would lead, step by step, to higher standards of living, higher education, vigorous nationalism, and ultimately, to the demand for complete independence. The case of Palestine is of one piece with that of Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Transjordania and Arabia.

No Jew can withhold his admiration for Mr. Van Paassen's eloquent defense. He writes like Emile Zola, burning with

a passion for righteousness. This admiration and the gratitude that goes with it are shared by us in the fullest measure. But we hope that it will not seem ungracious on our part, if we point out a weakness in his book. That weakness must be understood, and avoided in other Zionist arguments, if Zionism is not to be exposed to a new and different kind of attack.

By making the case of Palestine equivalent to that of the other backward countries, Mr. Van Paassen invites the anti-Zionist to ask a very pertinent question, namely, "If it is imperialism that you are fighting in Palestine, as in other lands, why not fight for the independence of Palestine *as it is now*? Where do the Jews come in? The situation is a very simple one: The poor felaheen are being oppressed by the feudalistic, pro-Axis, fascistic effendis; these downtrodden Arabs need to be emancipated; awaken them to their true interests and help turn Palestine into a modern, democratic nation, similar to the kind of nation Spain tried to become before the Nazis and Fascists, with Franco at the helm, destroyed it."

This argument is, unfortunately, a strong one, growing directly out of the thesis which places Palestine in the same category as the other Arab lands. The fact is, however, that other important considerations are involved in Palestine, considerations which, to be sure, Mr. Van Paassen does not ignore, but which, when analyzed, are not integral to the main theme of his book. These considerations include the historic connection of the Jewish people with the land of Israel, the homelessness of the Jew and the consequent social and economic problems, the international obligations undertaken by the nations of the world after the last war, the unspeakable horrors of Jewish suffering during the past four years, and the crying need for a Jewish sovereign state to establish the integrity and the status of the Jewish people.

These are considerations which undoubtedly impinge upon British imperialism; but to present Zionism merely as the antagonist of imperialism is to present it without relation to Jewish historic claims and contemporary needs, or to the world's need for a final solution of the Jewish problem.

The glorious record of Jewish heroism which makes up one full chapter of the book is thrilling; but here again the argument is not clear. True, the Jews have fought valiantly. But one could well defend the Zionist case even if the Palestinian Jews had not sprung to the defense of Britain—if such inaction on their part were conceivable. The sacrifice of Jewish lives is not an argument for Zionism. It is, however, an expression of faith in Britain and should move the British people to deal loyally with the Jews.

The issuance of the White Paper was an act of disloyalty, a breach of a solemn covenant with our people. Will the people of Great Britain permit its government to persist in this disloyalty, or will they demand that their government remember the "forgotten ally" and deal honorably with a valiant comrade in arms?

We await the British response.

REDUCTIO AD ABSURDUM

IT is a long time since Jewish life was agitated by religious controversies. Thanks largely to the recently organized American Council for Judaism, they are beginning to flare up again. In the middle decades of last century, particularly in Germany when the Reform movement was taking shape with Geiger and Holdheim in the lead, western Judaism was torn by religious conflicts concerning issues like ***kashrut***,

Sabbath observance, changes in the liturgy, etc. From Germany those conflicts were transferred to this country, where the Reform movement had freer scope to function, because of the non-interference of the government in matters of religion.

Out of those struggles came the Pittsburgh Platform in 1885, which crystalized the Reform movement, and the Jewish Theological Seminary, which sought to stem that movement. With the arrival of Schechter and the rise of Zionism, Jewish religious controversies in this country began to die down. What had threatened to develop into a denominational rift within American Jewry subsided into a mere difference in emphasis. Historical Judaism, promulgated by Schechter, has more or less come to recognize the principle of evolution, and the Reform movement has come to accept the peoplehood of Israel with Palestine as religio-cultural inspiration.

This rapprochement has recently been attacked, not by the Orthodox, but by the orthodox Reformers who, like the Daughters of the American Revolution, refuse to sanction any revolution since that of their fathers. These orthodox Reformers are now represented by the American Council for Judaism. The Council is seeking to resurrect the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885, which has been superseded by the Platform of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, adopted at its Convention in Columbus in 1937.

The main incentive to the formation of the American Council for Judaism has been the growing recognition on the part of the overwhelming majority of Jews that the future of Judaism and of the Jewish people is bound up with the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. This recognition, to be sure, in no way calls for the acceptance of national status of the Jews of the Diaspora. Neither does it have the least intimation of any present or ultimate political connection of the Jews of Palestine with those in other countries. Only deliberate misrepresentation of Zionism can charge it with fostering any kind of political nationhood for Diaspora Jewry. Yet so obsessed are some of our people with a fear of any affirmative Jewish life that, instead of combating that misrepresentation, they make capital of it and use it as a basis for combating Zionism. It would not do, however, to engage in such a campaign in a spirit that might betray a purely secular interest in playing safe; hence the resort to religious sanction. The opposition to Zionism is thus given a theological front. Religion is declared to be the only bond that unites Jews, to the exclusion of any other possible interest.

To what absurdities that conception of Judaism is apt to lead some of our people has recently been demonstrated by Rabbi H. J. Schachtel, one of the organizers of the American Council for Judaism. We are informed that, in taking charge of his new post as rabbi of Congregation Beth Israel in Houston, Texas, he persuaded his Board of Directors to draw up a resolution that would bar from voting membership all believers in the "Rabbinic and Mosaic Laws which regulate diet." Accordingly, none but simon-pure Pittsburgh-Platform-Reformers shall henceforth be eligible as members. Should a Jew who observes *kashrut* apply for membership, he would probably have to eat a ham sandwich, even if it choked him, to prove that he was eligible. In their eagerness to show that religion is the only bond that unites Jews the directors of the Houston congregation have adopted a policy which is bound to inject discord into what was hitherto a happy Jewish community.

We are further informed that so great is the zeal of the directors of that congre-

gation for religion which is "the only uniting bond of Jews," that they are about to launch a heresy-hunting campaign and to demand that the Hebrew Union College and other institutions and agencies of Reform Judaism be investigated for the purpose of purging them of all traces of Jewish nationalism. The fact that the religious textbooks issued by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations are good enough to be used by Orthodox and Conservative as well as by Reform religious schools renders them suspect. What with second-class members, institutional purging and book-burning we may live to see a kind of nazified Judaism—all in the name of the religion which is the only bond that unites Jews.

REALITIES AND VALUES

KEFAR LEON BLUM, A VILLAGE in Palestine on Jewish National Fund Land near the Syrian and the Transjordanian borders, was dedicated on November 10th. The new village honors the name of the former Premier of France who is now a prisoner in a Nazi concentration camp. The dedication of this village is of particular interest to American Jews for two reasons. The land on which it is located was purchased by a sum of money mainly contributed by American labor groups affiliated with the A.F.L., and among the *halutzim* that have redeemed the land for settlement are young Americans, who received their *hakhsharah* in this country and have earned their right to *hityashvut* (settlement on the soil) by their achievement as pioneers.

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A RECENT SURVEY OF PUBLIC opinion conducted by Fortune Magazine asked the question, "Are there any groups of people you think are trying to get ahead at the expense of people like you?" Of those who answered in the affirmative (32 per cent of the total), 21.5 per cent referred to the Jews as the group that stood in their way. We are not much interested in the conclusion reached by the survey because that is inconsequential. That anti-Semitism exists, we have always known. Its exact extent such a pole is inadequate to determine. But we regard the whole conduct of such a survey as mischievous. What question does it answer? Does the recording of the opinion of the public affect in the slightest the legitimacy of that opinion? Are moral and social issues to be determined by a mere count of noses? In dealing with prejudice, the raising of a question immediately insinuates that either answer to the question is respectable. It thus tends to strengthen the very prejudice that it investigates. People should not be asked whether they hate Jews or Catholics or Negroes, as the case may be; they should be told that it is wrong for them to do so, and why it is wrong.

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THIS IS JEWISH BOOK MONTH. If you have not yet been made aware of the fact, it is not the fault of the Jewish Book Council of America, which, under the chairmanship of Dr. Mordecai Soltes, has made elaborate plans for its observance throughout the country. The Committee is making use of the radio, libraries, schools, book exhibits and other devices to call attention to the wealth of good literature on Jewish themes in English, Hebrew and Yiddish. Since Reconstructionism depends on the literate for its success, of course we are in sympathy with the purpose of Jewish Book Month. Here is a suggestion to Reconstructionist groups who are looking for something to do: Establish a Jewish reference and circulating library in your synagogue, and

see that it contains a shelf of Reconstructionist literature.

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WE CALLED ATTENTION IN OUR issue of October 19 to the case of Alton Levy, who was demoted from the rank of sergeant to that of private and sentenced to four months confinement at hard labor and the forfeiture of $18.00 pay per month for four months, ostensibly for making "false and highly derogatory statements" against General Early Duncan. Circumstances surrounding the trial, however, give good ground to believe that the real reason for his sentence was his espousal of decent treatment for the Negro soldiers plus the fact of his being a Jew. The War Department has confirmed the sentence, but the Workers Defense League is circulating a petition to the President in Levy's behalf. We recommend that our readers back the petition for a Presidential inquiry. If you want more facts, write for them to Workers Defense League, 112 East 19th Street, New York City.

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IN HIS REPORT ON "SELECTIVE Service in Wartime," General Hershey gives figures on the numbers and denominational status of conscientious objectors. Of the 10,256 men who come in this category, 5,201 are in special camps, and only of this latter number have we records of their denominational affiliation. Most of these belong to denominations like the Mennonites or Society of Friends, which are in principle opposed to all war, but there are also included 21 identified as Jews. The proportion of Jewish conscientious objectors to the Jewish population is comparable to that of the Catholics who number 81. Although the synagogue as a whole is backing the war effort, these objectors were able to show that, as the selective service act requires, their scruples stem from "religious training and belief." There is no inconsistency here, for the Jewish religious tradition is open to more than one interpretation, and Catholic Israel is broad enough to include the conscientious objector. In view of the services these men are rendering in working on farms, in working in state mental hospitals and in exposing themselves to disease germs for purposes of scientific investigation, they are entitled to our respect. Whether one agrees with their philosophy or not—and we do not—one must honor their courage and patriotism, and their devotion to the cause of peace.

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A SIGN OF THE AWAKENING conscience of the American people to the need of rescuing as many Jews as possible from immediate destruction in Europe is to be seen in the introduction into both houses of Congress of a resolution to this end by a bi-partisan group. The resolution calls for "the creation by the President of a commission of diplomatic, economic and military experts to formulate and effectuate a plan of immediate action designed to save the surviving Jewish people of Europe from extinction at the hands of Nazi Germany." In view of the evidences of contact between our armed forces and the underground movements in Europe, and in the light of the assistance rendered by Sweden to the Jews of Denmark with the aid of the Danish people, there is ground to believe that, if such a commission were established, it would find ways and means of rescuing considerable numbers of our people.

A Pen Portrait of Moses Loeb Lilienblum

By GRACE GOLDIN

NOW that our country is at war, we call, as Americans, upon the founding fathers, and repeat for our own comfort what they proclaimed of Democracy at a time when democratic thought was a creative process, an adventure, an experiment. So too, now that the validity of American Zionism is being questioned by certain Jews, it may strengthen us in our Zionism to remember our pioneers — those first modern Zionists who lived in the middle of the nineteenth century and drew up the blueprints for a new Palestine in their lives, their philosophies, their struggles, and their dreams. Among the earliest Lovers of Zion these four stand forth: Moses Hess the philosopher; Peretz Smolenskin the artist; Leon Pinsker the political leader; and Moses Loeb Lilienblum the plodder, the grind, the *batlan* scholar. He too was fired with a Zionist ideal, but whereas Smolenskin burned with a clear blue flame, Lilienblum smouldered with a stubborn, hidden heat amid the ashes. As today we look back over his career, we marvel that even this man felt for Zion: if he, the least inflammable of men, could find in Zionism his ideal, how much more so we, who are equipped with normal human vision and enthusiasms!

"Sins of Youth"

Some persons, unfortunate in disposition, seem to create their own unhappiness. Certainly many of Lilienblum's misfortunes grew from a graceless nature; he was slow-moving, obstinate-thinking, as simple and ponderous as a boulder. He plodded after his thoughts from station to station and from conclusion to conclusion; yet no one was more dismayed than he when inexorable rationality led him to heresy. But let us begin at the beginning. Lilienblum's childhood was spent in the Russian ghetto. His parents were neither rich nor poor, as poverty goes among Russian Jews; his early life was not unhappy. He was a child prodigy, early expert in Talmud, and this made him a desirable match for the daughter of some devout, aspiring merchant. So he was married off at thirteen to a child of eleven and went to live with his in-laws, as the custom was. They supported him till he turned twent-one; all he had to do was beget his children and study in his books.

The study turned out unfortunately; it did not make for young Lilienblum's happiness. From Talmud he was led to the study of medieval Jewish philosophers; from them to Levinsohn, then to Krochmal, then to the modern poets Wessely and Lebenson; by that time, though the process took years, he was well on the way to Haskalah. Now, he loved ritual practices with all his heart and was devoted to the traditional beliefs; he was a born conservative; but on the other hand, his faith was incorruptible — in the conclusions of his own reasoning. When, by study and inching thought, he had convinced himself of the truth of a certain postulate, man could not dislodge him. His mind was like a kodak film— once wound and exposed, no one, not even himself, could wind it back again. Nor was he capable of dissimulation, even for his own good. His reading convinced him that certain observances were not "Torah from Sinai"; very well, he ceased to observe them altogether. His mother-in-law was infuriated by such be-

havior; she quarreled bitterly with the boy. And Moses' young wife was a coarse creature with whom he held nothing in common; he got no help from her. It is hard enough in all conscience to sympathize with a literal and obstinate soul like Lilienblum. His closest relatives found him impossible.

But worse was yet to come. While the lad lived with his wife's people, he could at least study with a certain amount of security. But when he was twenty-one, the free board came to an end. The dowry promised him was not given to him, and out he went into the world to make a living for himself and his family. He opened a small *yeshivah*—what else could he do?—which supported them in very poor style; and he went on, machine-like, thinking, thinking, thinking. His thoughts had already steamrollered him over into Haskalah. He began to write for Haskalah papers, to preach enlightenment to the youth. The community, prompt to condemn, cursed him for a heretic. They, of course, could not foresee his future: compared to that, his present state of mind was positively pious. In his larger essays, he still was concerned with Talmud, and all he dared write was that, since the Talmudic sages had always been progressive and in accord with contemporary exigencies, it might also be well for successors of the Talmudic tradition to mitigate the more severe passages of law. That was all. A year later, that was not all. The pitiless mind had rolled on, and Lilienblum brought out a postscript to his Talmudic meditations, innocently enough entitled *Additions.*

From the suggestion that certain legal restrictions might be revised, he had travelled, in a year, to the outright demand that they be reformed, and the whole *Shulhan Arukh,* that body of law which had been fanatically preserved in every detail from the sixteenth century, be worked over till it sort better with modern demands. When the community read that, police had literally to be called out to protect a scholar. The antagonism, persecution, and downright cruelty of his Jewish townsfolks left their mark on Lilienblum's mind forever after. Never too gay a man, he abandoned himself to unsociability. He never spoke save to ask a question, and when he was addressed answered only after ponderous silence. He kept to his own company, would not entertain, and once, on a *Simhat Torah* was found sitting alone in his house at a bare table nibbling an unholidayed meal. When his friends reminded him that it was *yomtov,* he looked up dazed. "Oh," he said, "I forgot completely. Of course it is. . . . Of course. . . . But wherever I turn, I see the dead before me. . . ." A mind like that is not enlivened by adversity.

Now Moses had come of age, he fell into further difficulties—fell in love. But being a family man and innately conservative, he knew nothing would come of it, though the lady was cultured, charming, sympathetic, in every way the direct opposite of his wife. He wrote her poems from time to time, poor fellow, railing against the institution of child-marriage. And, broken by his feelings, exiled by his community, he moved to Odessa, where an enlightened man might dwell without danger to life and limb. But again, how was he to make a living? He knew no Russian nor any European language, no sciences, and only what philosophy he had taught himself. The deadly limitations of his education brought him back again to teaching Hebrew. He was no better off than in the beginning. In the next ten years he went from teaching to editorship, from editorship to bookkeeping, and from bookkeeping—to writing an autobiography.

His book, called *The Sins of Youth,* is one of the saddest books any Jew ever wrote. For Lilienblum had lost his Judaism. Arguments against the *Shulhan Arukh* had led to scepticism even of the Talmud; the Talmud once discredited, Biblical authority fell next; and when one admits the Bible is not divinely inspired, where is the God-given truth of Jewish dogma? That conclusion once arrived at—though it took ten years of thought—where is the Judaism of Moses Loeb Lilienblum? Nor was our man one to rejoice in nay-saying. He was a simple fellow, nothing could be less to his taste than heresy indulged in for its own devilish delight. His heart desired with all its strength to believe, but his mind led him thinking—to despair.

Faith was only one of the things that failed him, though it loomed largest. He had failed himself, or his parents had doomed him to uselessness; this was the sin of youth, a sin rather of parents who would not educate their children for the world. Even the Haskalah failed him. He saw into the careless Judaism of Odessa Jews. He also saw that young people who managed, through Haskalah, to get in touch with Western education, were no better off than their orthodox contemporaries. Enlightened Jews had substituted Russian for Talmud and science for Bible, but they too worked in the rarified atmosphere of learning for its own sake, they never learned to do anything useful with what they were taught. Yet the most important thing of all is that one be in a position to contribute to the world. Lilienblum found himself the most useless creature alive. "I have taken an inventory of my life's business, and I am heartbroken, because I find that in striking the balance there remains only a naught on the credit side! My heart is empty, I am barren as an ice-waste, like an oak hewn down."

Lilienblum Turns to Socialism

Sick at heart with himself and Judaism, Lilienblum yet groped toward an answer. He turned to Russian writers for what Jews had not given him. He found that modern Russian philosophers agreed with him as to the need for positive results, practical conclusions. In their writings he found the healthy materialism for which he had looked in vain among Jews. Bolstered by Russian positivist philosophers, and by the encouragement of the Socialist movement, which gathered him in with open arms at the time of his despair, he began to preach salvation of mankind. The ghetto will be saved as mankind is saved, through historic evolution toward a better social order. He and his socialist comrades were working toward the time when there would be no more nationality, only human beings. "Toward nature I have a natural bent which will not change even after my death; but to my people my relation is accidental or conventional, because all nationality is only accidental and conventional. Therefore, as I even now see it, I am first a man and then a Hebrew."

His message to his second-cousins, the Jews, was that they must focus their resources, produce, leave their Talmud folios and establish themselves on agricultural colonies, introduce courses in manual training for the Ghetto youth. Action will cure the Ghetto—action, not historical research; plans, not poems.

As Lilienblum stood upon this noble eminence, offering salvation with both hands to right-minded Jews, Russia herself was preparing lightnings around him. In 1881 the downpour came—and Lilienblum, and the Jewish socialists, and the assimilated, professional, Haskalah heretical Jews found themselves engulfed in accusation after accusation, restriction upon restriction, a barbarous torrent of

indignities which led from abuse to violence, and from violence to pogrom. Jews who had left their Judaism behind were swept back into the fold. Jews who had gone too far to turn back converted; but only those who utterly lost spirit did this. The others mourned together, faithful and penitent in one synagogue. Yet, amid the lamentations, Moses Loeb Lilienblum rejoiced.

His Return to His People

How was it possible? The distress of his nation was to this man not the greatest calamity of an unhappy existence, but a tragic catharsis exciting and ennobling him. "When the terror had ceased," he wrote afterwards, "my spirit was content and my heart rejoiced that fate had caused me to experience several times within one week something of that which our unhappy ancestors had to endure almost their whole lives through." No longer did he write down to the Jews. He had come again to rest among them. Repentant sinners were more to his taste than the flagrant deserters of a happier age, and his delight was boundless when he discovered that calamity had sent the very Jewish youth back to their Judaism. "We have seen our young men return to us," he exulted, "and our hearts were filled with joy. In their restoration we found balm for our wounds, and with wonder and delight we asked, 'Who has born us these?'" After all, the great passion of Lilienblum's heart was for Judaism, not for an abstract social order.

But the positivist, the lover of action, still was restless. Now that we are together again, brethren, what shall we do? How can we make the most of our oneness? Haskalah has failed us, Orthodoxy is not progressive enough to include us all, Reform is mere emptiness. And ghastly things are happening in this world: all Russia challenges our existence. Alas, we Jews are strangers wherever we dwell. If, by chance, we are tolerated in any land, for a period of years, it is slippery tolerance; we are but tenants in another man's house. The landlord puts up with us so long as he finds us convenient to his plans; but should we interfere, should we try to compete with him, out we go! The end result is the same in every age and country—we are summarily evicted, though sometimes it be for a religious reason, as in the Middle Ages, and sometimes for a national and economic reason as now.

What then? We must remove the cause of our unwelcomeness. We must cease to be strangers everywhere. In some one country we must dwell as landlords. What country shall this be but Palestine, the land that is really our own by every historic and emotional right! "We must undertake the colonization of Palestine on so comprehensive a scale that, in the course of one century, the Jews may be able to leave inhospitable Europe almost entirely and settle in the land of our forefathers to which we are legally entitled." Here was a course of action for Jews, all Jews, the Jewish nation. Jews *are* a nation; they will be one as long as ten million Jews all over the world still feel their national unity. But national feeling unadorned will get us nowhere; neither will any national movement which is content to move in the realm of spirit. Mere cultural Zionism is a farce. A Jewish homeland is earnestly needed to lift Jews out of their *political* degradation; culture—four thousand years of it—they have already. It will not be necessary for Jews to govern the homeland before they move in, if guarantees of government should prove too great an obstacle for early colonizers: "Historic citizenship is the chief thing, that the people should be domiciled upon the soil of the homeland."

Colonization may take a long time; it will probably develop gradually; but of many plans for the Jews, this alone is real—all others being visions and vexation of spirit.

An Unpractical Protagonist of "Practical Zionism"

In his prospectus for the return to Zion, as always, Lilienblum tested every idea on the counter of usefulness, and set it down only when it rang clearly and logically. Fluent expression did not come to him at any time. He wrote only under some pressure from without, and, even then, wasted no words. Every phrase had to be concise, reasonable, staccato, like his speech. He hated philosophizing; words, like all other tools, ought to accomplish their work and have done with the least fuss possible. He had, especially when old, no use for poetry. If there is anything poetic or visionary about his plan, that quality is due not to his imagination but, quite naturally, to his naivete. Moses Loeb Lilienblum was just a simple man. It is told of him that, reading a poem whose ending went, "Saith the Lord," he earnestly asked the poet, "Tell me, please, when did the Lord speak with you? What language did he use?"

For all his studied practicality, Lilienblum's prescription for the Return was extremely impractical, as experience with colonization later proved, but as a truly practical man should have been able to foresee. Transport all Jews, ten million of them, into little Palestine! Even today, with a world-wide Zionist organization on the job and the need for a haven greater than ever before, only half a million Jews live there; and it has been estimated that the country could not hold more than a million more. But Lilienblum called for wholesale immigration, and the simplicity of his mind was echoed in the readiness of the Russian Jewish masses to believe him and follow. As Smolenskin celebrated the ideal of return to Zion, so Lilienblum popularized the means of resettlement; colonization became an obsession for the college youth. Many of these were moved to throw aside careers, prospects, and personal comforts, to martyr themselves on Palestinian soil. Before taking ship for Zion, some of them came, as did young Shemarya Levin, for a first and last word with the prophet of colonization. On their lips were the words Levin expected to say: "I am one among that younger generation who listened to you and was convinced. I have come to you because I wish to fulfil your ideal, and follow the path which you have marked for us. In a word: you called to us—and I am here."

Those young enthusiasts found—what Levin found—a middle-aged man with the features of a village rabbi, a helpless, impractical *batlan*—high forehead, long curly beard, long eyebrows, sad eyes. The one incongruity with the *batlan* character was that he sat bareheaded — he looked naked without the skullcap. Disheartening as seemed his face, his manner was worse: dry, cold, unused to friendly converse, the last man in the world with whom one might get intimate, even after a lifetime of acquaintanceship. He showed not a spark of enthusiasm, not a tremor of excitement; his speech was cold and hard, Levin reports, as if cut out with a stylus. The first question he asked his disciple was, "How much money have you with you?" And in the stunned silence which his question produced, Lilienblum turned aside to some mourners (he was secretary of the local burial society) and began to bargain with them over the price of grave-clothes.

Lilienblum's Contribution to Jewish Thought

By DAVID POLISH

MOSES Loeb Lilienblum turned to Zionism after an early career as Maskil. To him, Haskalah had been an act of faith for which he endured persecution and penury. His transition to Zionism was therefore not a sanguine substitution of one cause for another. It was the culmination of a metamorphosis beginning with early misgivings about Haskalah. After the 1881 pogroms, he emerged as a thorough-going nationalist.

Lilienblum's Critique of Haskalah

The process of conversion extended over at least a decade. In 1872, he already referred to the Jewish position in Europe as *"Makkah she'en lah refuah"* (an incurable disease"). He had encountered the impasse of Smolenskin who saw no solution in Haskalah or elsewhere. "The Children of Israel . . . are destined to scatter over the world and to go scavenging for bread. . . . Who can help thousands of ne'er-do-well *batlanim*. . . . Our wound is grievous, for it is incurable." (Lilienblum, Essays, Vol. II, p. 25.) Thus Lilienblum recognized the economic futility of Haskalah. He likewise dismissed as escapism its appeal to esthetic and literary perfection through *melitzah* (fine writing). Neither wisdom nor adjustment could thus be attained. In 1875, he urged the abandonment of trivial contemporary learning in favor of more basic and utilitarian knowledge. He deplored the excess of half-educated professional Jews who were unfitted for making a living. Their awakening to the futility of *melitzah* had resulted in a widespread defection from Hebrew culture. We ought to "abandon empty poems and inconsequential stories for the sciences." (Ibid. pp. 116, 147).

Lilienblum also renounced that wing of Haskalah which held the Jew responsible for his economic inequality. He obliquely took Gordon to task for saddling Talmudic and Rabbinic leadership with the onus of Jewry's abject state. Our inequality is not of our making, but of our enemies'. Our alienation from the soil is due to historical circumstances over which we could not prevail. "Fortunately, now (1879) Russian Jewry is in a position to establish agricultural settlements in Russia, with the aid of the Alliance. Thus we shall cast off the shame of the nation, which its enemies accused of incompetence for everything except business . . . and speculation." (Ibid. 129) By 1879, then, Lilienblum had advanced from his 1872 position of futility to a program of action. When the plan of the Alliance miscarried, Lilienblum did not surrender his position, but insisted that wealthy Jews should give their fortunes for Jewish agriculture so that the stigma of parasitism could be eradicated. Only through labor can this be achieved, not through syncophantic efforts to placate our rulers. Until we abandon the illusion that our help will come from without, and accept the faith in our self-emancipating powers, we shall suffer unabating inequality. (Vol. IV, pp. 51-54.) Our very strangeness disqualifies us for equality in Europe. "The law can put strangers on a par with the citizens, but the nature of man is not governed by written laws." (Ibid., p. 55.)

His Conception of Jewish Nationalism

In this analysis of the Jewish problem, Lilienblum arrived at the threshold of Zionism.

In the ebbtide of the 1881 pogroms he

recorded his conviction that the Jews were strangers in Europe.

"When I became convinced . . . that we will be strangers . . . even if we should be full of Haskalah . . . all the old panaceas were dispelled in my heart. . . . We are strangers . . . throughout Europe. Why should we be strangers . . . when our own fatherland has not yet been forgotten? . . . We must strive to cease being strangers. . . ." This marked his assumption of intellectual leadership in the Zionist movement. His concept of Jewish nationalism is here outlined:

The Mendelssohnian theory that we are a religious group only is fallacious. It is disproved by the fact that our co-nationalists are dearer to us than our co-religionists. "The Karaites, for example, are much nearer to us than the Subotniki . . . for the former are the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, like us; they are our brothers, members of our nation." (Vol. IV, pp. 4-5.) What religious relationship is there between the German Reformers and the Polish Hasidim? Why are "religious" Jews unconcerned about the plight of the Subotniki and absorbed in that of Polish Jewry? (Vol. IV, pp. 62-63.) We are a nation, even if our aspirations toward Palestine should not be fulfilled.

Lilienblum is careful to underscore the independence of Jewish Nationalism from other nationalistic movements. Its apparent resemblance to the Slavophile and German forms of nationalism is only superficial. Actually, Jewish nationalism antedates them. The Bible, Mishnah, Talmud, Midrashim and moralistic literature are nationalistic. The philsophies of the Spanish era "Blended this wisdom (Philosophy) which bore blossoms but not fruit, with a branch from Israel's vineyard." This synthesis was the Jewish Torah, which is essentially nationalistic. Maimonides and every Jewish thinker until Mendelssohn (except Spinoza) was a nationalist. Even the literature of Wessely's time was nationalistic. Only Mendelssohn's followers were alien to the Jewish national spirit. The three chief exponents of Jewish nationalism in that period were Krochmal in Galicia, Shemuel David Luzzatto in Italy, and Salvador in France. They were unaware of Aksadov, Bismarck, or Garibaldi. (Vol. III, pp. 93-95.) Krochmal was the first Hebrew writer to understand that every people has a unique national spirit. The essence of Luzzatto's nationalism is to be found in *"Derekh Eretz"* in which he indicates the difference between Judaism and Hellenism. This is also noted in his correspondence. Salvador, though born of a Christian mother, spoke in Hebrew, and was a nationalist.

Our nationalism has pursued not only an independent historical course, but a spiritual one as well. It is unique in that it is permeated with religious values. Jewish nationalism is not distinguished even by language. During the second Temple, Aramaic was the tongue of Palestine. The truly distinct qualities of Jewish nationalism are "the Mitzvot—Sukkot, the Chanukah lights; God . . . is the beginning and the end of the ideal of the Jewish national spirit. . . . Therefore the children of Israel whose Torah, land and God, are national . . . strove to preserve the inner content of the national spirit. They paid little heed to its external forms. . . . Our statute books are closely bound up with our national spirit. . . . The spirit of our people is preserved in the Holy Writ, the Mishnah and Aggadah. . . . From these books we must learn what to do, if we seek to renew our national spirit." (Vol. III, pp. 86-89.)

(It should be noted that in his testament, published posthumously by Druyanov in *Ha'olam,* Lilienblum called upon his fellow-Jews to observe the Mitzvot,

which he was convinced would unite Israel.)

We will never abandon our national status through assimilation because we are superior to other peoples. The reason is that our civilization (this term is Lilienblum's) is older than that of modern Europe. It is of a piece with and indigenous to our own religious and spiritual development, whereas modern European civilization is a superimposed mixture of Judaism and Hellenism, which the peoples of Europe have never properly absorbed. (Vol. IV, pp. 6-7.)

The Homelessness and Spiritual Frustration of Jews in the Diaspora

Just as assimilation is untenable, so is the effort to stamp out anti-Semitism in the Diaspora. It is felt by some Jews that, with the liquidation by a liberal world of anti-Semitism, the justification of Jewish Nationalism will disappear and, conversely, that the collapse of nationalism will spell the end of anti-Semitism. This is fallacious, because anti-Semitism is neither the cause of, nor a reaction against, Jewish nationalism. Rather is it the product of Jewish homelessness and it will therefore persist as long as our homelessness endures. Strangers are never accepted on a footing of equality. Out of an urge for self-preservation, nations never permit guest peoples to compete with them or to jeopardize their livelihood. The only element in this factor which has changed is the criterion by which a strange people is designated. In the middle ages it was religion. Today it is nationality and race. This new type of anti-Semitism will continue for a long time. "The hungry German, beholding a stranger who enjoys a morsel of bread, . . . is convinced that, were the stranger to disappear, he would come into possession of the bread. Little does he realize that thousands of strangers are hungry like him, while hundreds of his fellow-citizens are more prosperous than the individual stranger." (Vol. IV, pp. 25-26.) "It is clear that as long as the very air will be considered the private domain of some nation . . . the Jews will be a burden to the citizens in whatever they engage. . . . (even agriculture) . . ." (Ibid., p. 29.)

Not only are we physically homeless, but spiritually frustrated in the Diaspora. We cannot live unequivocally in conformance to our heritage. France, a Catholic country, prohibits divorces. Therefore we may not exercise our right to divorce. Switzerland regards *shehitah* as inhumane. Therefore an effort is made to prevent us from practicing ritual slaughter. We may not give free expression to our convictions. Gladstone accuses us of conservatism, and Bismarck of radicalism. The Czechs resent us because we are not anti-German, and vice versa. This reduces us to craven apologists, occupied only with denying the stupidest libels.

Since we are not responsible for our alien status, since we are a thorn in the side of our neighbors, and since we are a nation, albeit in exile, it is up to the world to find a place for us where we will not be strangers. That place is Palestine, and Palestine alone. (Ibid., pp. 30-31.)

Lilienblum's Zionist Program

With the world's help, we must try to purchase Palestine and establish a Jewish government there. But government or not, we must establish a Jewish community in Palestine. This was not a new idea. Dr. Ludwig August Frankel, in his *"Yerushalayma,"* had already propounded it. "We are an *Am Olam,* the only nation in the true sense of the word. Why should we not also strive to be a nation in the political sense." (Ibid., pp. 9-10.)

To achieve political statehood we should begin by organizing a movement for Palestinian settlement. Its object must

be to raise money with which to purchase large tracts in Palestine from Turkey. "After we establish about three hundred colonies . . . the desolate land will be restored, and the Jewish settlers will have an opportunity to earn a livelihood in their flourishing ancestral home." (Vol. IV, pp. 69-71.)

Despite this spiritual interpretation of Zionism, Lilienblum was an antagonist of Ahad Ha'am's cultural Zionism. Unlike Ahad Ha'am, Lilienblum felt that a direct corollary of his own spiritual approach must be a political solution which would insure the former. He was disturbed by the efforts of the Hoveve Zion to inject a cultural issue into the purely political aspects of Zionism. "The one purpose of Zionism must be to restore our people's (national) life. All the other issues on which the welfare of our people depends are not bound up with Zionism. . . . Why should we inject into Zionism, which should be the possession of the entire people, separate elements about which the people disagree? . . . I can be a Zionist and still be remote from culture, like the Boers (who, if they should be defeated, will go down not because of a cultural but a numerical deficiency.) I can likewise be an anti-Zionist and still want our people to know Hebrew." (Vol. IV, pp. 262-288.) Lilienblum insisted that the acquisition of as much land as possible in Palestine took priority over all other factors. (Ibid., 387.) To wait, as Ahad Ha'am urged, for the spiritual regeneration of diaspora Jewry, was chimerical. "Why does Ahad Ha'am not inform us how such a generation can be educated . . . as long as we are immersed in a strange environment and conditioned by it? It is enough to see the state of our contemporary letters to be convinced how little we can depend on such miracles. . . . We dare not neglect the land until others precede us there, until we eventually cry out, and from our etherial heights, enviously behold what is transpiring there. . . . If we temporize now, who knows what the years will bring?" (Ibid., pp. 408-429.)

Lilienblum's most trenchant argument was that, just as in Judaism there is no dichotomy between religion and nationalism, so there is no cleavage in Zionism between politics and culture. All of our culture is national, and all of our national expression is steeped in a cultural tradition. "The first Zionists saw no way of delimiting Hebrew culture. They considered all of our literature to be national. I find no other designation for the poems of Wessely, the work of Krochmal, the books of Shemuel David Luzzatto, Rappaport, Regio, Adam Ha-Cohen, Levinson, Frankel, Mapu, Michal, Shulman, Finn, Zweifel, Smolenskin, Gordon, Weiss, and others. . . ." (Vol. IV, p. 326.)

On similar grounds, Lilienblum objected to converting Zionism into a class movement, emphasizing the struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat. (Ibid., p. 389.) Nor did he favor the Jewish National Fund, because it stressed nationalization of the land and thus impeded its more rapid acquisition by private groups. (Ibid., p. 308.)

Lilienblum's chief contribution to Jewish thought was the conception of nationhood founded upon Israel's religious values. His nationalism is inherent in his insistence upon the complete identification of Israel with its ethnic-spiritual attributes. During this centenary of his birth, it is well to recall that Lilienblum who was a thorough-going political Zionist, never relinquished his insistence upon the spiritual motivation of our movement.

The Hebrew Name As a Survival Factor

(Based Upon a Recent Survey)

By ALFRED J. KOLATCH

THE continued survival of the Jewish people has long been recognized as one of the miraculous phenomena of history. Many diverse factors have been ascribed as responsible for our continued existence in the face of almost insurmountable obstacles throughout the centuries. There is one element in particular, however, which has not been given its due recognition, despite the foremost role it has played in the survival of a people without a land, without a government or a country of its own—the name element.

The Hebrew Name As a Survival Factor in the Past

Long before Shakespeare quipped lightly about the insignificance of a name, our rabbis expressed a contrary view when they emphasized the importance of the individual's name in the national life of our people. When considering the factors that helped preserve the identity and solidarity of Israel despite the cruel prolonged Egyptian enslavement, which could easily have crushed the spirit and backbone of any people, they listed the *name factor* as paramount. *Yisrael nigalu mimmitzraim shelo shinnu et shemam* (*Vayikra Rabbah,* 32:5). "Israel was redeemed from Egypt because they had not changed their Hebrew names." Names like Reuben and Benjamin were not exchanged for Egyptian forms even after 210 years of foreign influence. When the long and perilous trek to the promised land had been completed, the old Hebrew nomenclature was still to be found among the weary travelers. Salvation was achieved because the old traditional name was not forsaken. Had the old names been abandoned, the likelihood that redemption would be achieved would have been doubtful, for Israel in all probability would have ceased to be a united group in a position to be saved.

The name factor stood out so prominently in Egyptian days because it was one of the very few binding cords which served to tie a demoralized and disunited people. The many laws and customs which became part of the Jewish way of life were a later development. The *Torah,* and the ritual and ceremonies that grew out of it were things of the future. It therefore stood to reason, that, in the absence of other factors, the name would be all the more important in maintaining the unity of the group. As Judaism developed, many of the newer innovations, such as the Sabbath, holidays, and dietary laws—not to mention the Temple and the very State itself—relieved the name element of much of its responsibility in maintaining the unity of Israel. There were now other binding factors that served to strengthen the Jewish people.

Importance of Reinstating the Hebrew Name

It seems, however, that, beginning with the period of Emancipation a century and a half ago, Israel reached its saturation point. Not only were new customs and ceremonies not added to Jewish life, but the reservoir of those ancient but powerful binding forces began to diminish both qualitatively and quantitatively. The modern machine age with its many social and economic challenges to religion began to weaken the fabric of Jewish living. The dietary regulations became "antiquated laws" to the average Jewish mind. The Sabbath and holidays lost out in the modern Jew's struggle for a livelihood. Little by little, the uniting factors

that had served us so well and so long fell into obscurity with nothing of value to replace them. Sadly enough, even those elements which have never conflicted, from any point of view, with the new pace of modern life have fallen by the wayside along with the others.

To overcome this crisis that has befallen us we must seek out once again and reinstate those elements of Judaism which may be re-employed for Jewish survival. Among them reconsideration and re-emphasis must be given to the Hebrew name, for it can be of great value for the future of the group. Surely, even those who may see a burden or hardship in many of the old Jewish practices, cannot honestly claim that bearing a Hebrew name and being conscious of it constitute an inconvenience. It requires none of our time or effort. It merely demands of us some slight degree of attention—a bit of our thought and consciousness.

A recent name survey that the author conducted among the school children of 48 congregations in 38 cities and 13 states throughout the country, indicates that even this element has been sorely neglected by the parents of our youth. The difficulty which most rabbis encountered in obtaining each child's Hebrew name, is indicative of the sorry state we would be in if, as in Egyptian days, our salvation were dependent upon how closely we have guarded our names. What one rabbi wrote is typical of the general difficulty encountered by the majority: "It will take me some time to comply with your request. Not only do the children not know their own names in Hebrew, but the parents don't either. They have to go to the grandmother or *'zaida'* to find out." What a sad reflection, indeed, upon our modern parent and his Jewish attitude!

"What's in a Name?"

But from those names that we do have and were able to reckon with in our survey, much is to be learned. Not only the character of our people but an inkling into their relationship to the times in which they live can be learned from some of the facts collected. The capriciousness or the earnestness with which we designate the personal name of our offspring is the measuring rod by which we may be judged. Do we understand the meaning of the name? How closely correlated is the Hebrew name we have chosen with the English? Is it in keeping with our tradition? A study of these questions reveals some very interesting facts.

There was a time when a name carried with it significance and meaning, when it related to a valued moment or expressed a cherished hope or memory in the life of the parent or progeny. Joseph was so called, the Biblical narrative relates, because the child's mother, Rachel, hoped that another child would "be added" to this one. (Gen. 30:24). Most prominent Biblical names were the product of some episode in the life of the child or his parents. This same consciousness of name found among our ancestors was, and continues to be, a characteristic of the thinking of many national groups, ancient and modern. The Chinese to this day, for example, carry as many as ten names during a lifetime. Upon entrance into each significant phase of the child's life, he is crowned with a new name, that it is hoped will encourage him in following his immediate career. At the time of birth he is given a personal name; a month later a milk name is conferred upon him; when starting school, the child is given a book-name; at the time of his wedding, a marriage name is added; and so on through life. Whether or not we look upon such a practice as pure superstition and sympathetic magic, and consider it utter nonsense, we will admit that it does reveal a certain feeling of reverence for the name. Underlying the outward crust of

primitiveness and naivete, which may be inconsistent with modern thinking, there does exist a valuable attitude which we of today have lost. The ancient Hebrew or the modern Chinese may have overdone it—we are "underdoing" it. We, today, choose names without understanding their significance or meaning in the slightest.

Anomalies in Modern Jewish Nomenclature

This lack of understanding and consciousness in making our selection has had many odd and amusing consequences. It has resulted in two opposite extremes: in the adoption by Jews of many Christian religious names, and in shying away from names originally regarded as wholesome for Jews, but now reserved for Christians only. If we were to study the name Sidney, for example, we would find that it is of Teutonic derivation, from St. Denys. How many are the *rabbis* who are "namewards" of the patron Saint! And how many of our daughters are named Natalie, meaning Christmas child, or Dolores, meaning sorrow of the mother of our lord. Noel, meaning Christmas, is not uncommon to Jewish boys. It seems almost as though many of these strictly Christian religious names have become exclusively Jewish appellations.

At the other extreme, we find that many names which we think of as those of Christians only, are actually either Jewish names of long standing or forms of ancient Jewish nomenclature. The average person, upon seeing a Jew with the name John, will look upon him very warily. John to him is not a name which a Jew should carry. Only the aristocratic or social climbers would choose such a name. The average Jew will reason that way. But as a matter of fact, John is immeasurably closer to Jewish tradition than the more common Henry or Louis or Robert. John is but a form of the very old and once common Johanan. James, which is but the English form of Jacob, and Mary, the Greek form of Miriam, are in the same category. Because we have forgotten the meaning and significance of the names we use, we have mistakenly encouraged the use of some names, and the avoidance of others.

Correlation Between Hebrew and English Names

A second condition that has resulted from our ignorance of the meaning of both our English and Hebrew names is the low degree of correlation that exists between the two. This is by no means a tragedy, nor will it affect the future of Jewish life. But if we are interested in keeping in step with our scientific age, we should carry out the process in all aspects of life. English first names today are not chosen on the basis of a similar etymology with the Hebrew, nor vice versa, but simply on the basis of assonance. Hence we will find, as our survey reveals, that the majority of names beginning with an "r" will be Reuven in Hebrew, the most commonly known Hebrew name beginning with the "r" sound. Definition or connotation plays no part in the choice.

There are some people who feel that it is a better procedure to follow the present haphazard method than to attempt to correlate the two. They feel that, inasmuch as no one recalls the etymology of these names, it is better to have a name like Shalom appear as Sheldon or Sherwood, than as Alfred or Raymond which bear the same meaning as Shalom. Again, it is a question of how scientific and exact we wish to be. Not everything that the average person has forgotten should we choose to drop.

Nor would the procedure of correlating as far as possible the English and the Hebrew personal name conflict, as some maintain, with the custom of naming the child after a deceased parent or grand-

parent. This custom, as observed in the past as well as in the present, only reckoned with the Hebrew name of the forbear. The secular name that was chosen for the child was never related to it, except perhaps in sound. The esthetic sense was always the guide for name-givers as far as the English name was concerned. As such, the old sentimental ties would remain untouched and unhampered by selecting an etymologically appropriate corresponding secular name.

The Diminishing Use of Biblical Names

But undoubtedly the most tragic feature of modern tendencies revealed in our name study is reflected in the ever diminishing position that the religious or Biblical name occupies. And although statistics indicate that this is a tendency common to the general population, our survey reveals that it is even more common to Jews. The people of the Book has drifted far from the Book!

The fluctuation in the general popularity of Biblical and religious names has a very interesting history. Biblical names were not very much in use in the early centuries of the common era. Christians refrained from adopting Old Testament names because of prejudice against Jews who generally bore them. Even the influence exerted by the Bishop of Seville in the 7th Century through his "Etymologiae," in which he points out the significance of Biblical names, failed to carry too much weight with the masses. Because of this anti-Semitic feeling, widespread adoption was curtailed until the 10th century.

It was not until the period of the Reformation that Biblical names were eagerly adopted. In the 16th and 17th centuries, as a reaction to the church dogmatism and policy, a sudden burst of enthusiasm in favor of scriptural names took place. Puritan England, in particular, preferred Biblical names to the others which they said "savoured of Papacy and Paganism." Many Puritan extremists, even as late as the 18th and 19th centuries, went so far as to take obscure and ugly names such as Kerenhappukh, or even an entire phrase or sentence from Scripture.

But with the coming of the French Revolution there came a revulsion against Biblical names. This antipathy grew with the passage of time and is still recognizable even in modern times, as is evidenced in two polls of personal names cast over a period of eight years.

In 1921, Simon Newton compiled, from 100,000 names in biographical dictionaries and other sources, the most common American names. Among the fifteen most popular names, as it is recorded in the 1921 Almanac, six were of a Biblical or religious character. In the second study of 400,000 names appearing in the 1929 Almanac, only four religious names were to be found among the leading fifteen. As compared with the rapid rate of decrease in usage of Biblical names evidenced in these two studies, our survey of 2,600 names reveals a frightful state. Although much more limited in scope than the above two, it is comprehensive enough to at least indicate the tendency of the times. Only two names are to be found, among the leading fifteen, which are of Biblical origin. And of these two, only one, David, is taken from the Old Testament. The other, Paul, is a New Testament character. The trend indicated by this survey recalls the centuries prior to the Reformation, when Christians would not adopt Old Testament names because they were peculiar to the Jew. What then are we to make of the fact that the trend is even stronger among Jews than among Christians? Perhaps there is to be found in all of this a commentary on the degree of religiosity existent among Jews as

compared with Christians. If the world at large has been retrogressing, we certainly are on the downgrade.

The Paucity of Hebrew Names

An extremely surprising element emerging from our survey is the paucity of Hebrew personal names employed today, as compared with the secular. Of the 5,200 English and Hebrew names sampled, there were found to be 439 different English names and only 184 Hebrew names. Despite the fact that our Hebraic culture is much older than the European cultures from which our English names are derived, the diversity of English names exceeded by almost two and a half times the Hebrew names in use. We might have expected the reverse to be the case. And the reason for this condition cannot be attributed to a scarcity of names from which to choose, because within our 4,000-year-old tradition there reposes a wealth of untapped material. The Hebrew Bible alone contains 2,800 different personal names, with many additional hundreds to be found in post-Biblical, Talmudic and medieval sources. It must be that our hearts and minds are not sufficiently concerned with the problem.

Too much blame, however, is not to be placed upon our people, religious leaders or laymen, for this state of name-poverty. Being without a national home for almost 2,000 years, conditions could not possibly have been conducive to fuller development in this sphere. Under normal circumstances, perhaps we might have manifested the interest and imagination necessary to tap the reserve of names in our possession. As it is, very little more could have been expected.

Palestine and the Revival of the Hebrew Name

Modern Palestine which is beginning to breathe once again for the first time in twenty centuries, is testimony that, given the opportunities of normal living, our imagination is still active and our will is still strong. Some of the Hebrew names appearing in our survey such as Magenah, Ahuvah, Zehava and Behirah are evidence of that fact. These are undoubtedly the first reflections of the creative awakening in modern Palestine. As conditions become stabilized in Palestine and the world over, we may expect in the near future to find, not that 4 per cent is the total number of Biblical Hebrew names in use, but that ten and twenty and thirty per cent of them are being employed.

If we will attempt to predict the future on the basis of the present tendency, we may hope for a revival of some of the old, long-forgotten names, as well as the discovery and creation of new ones. But more important than that will be the task of teaching our people the value in carrying a Hebrew name. It may be considered a minor and perhaps unimportant acquisition to the majority of our people, but it is of paramount importance to our people as a group. It is the duty of our rabbis and teachers to bring home this message to our people; to encourage them to adopt a Hebrew name and to be conscious of its importance. If seriously carried out by our leaders, it can redound to the benefit of the Jewish future, for it will mark the return of a once prominent and successful integrating factor. To succeed, even to the extent that every Jew shall know that a Jew must possess a Hebrew name in addition to his secular one, may be considered a battle well won on the survival front.

Discussion in Theology

THE ABSOLUTE AND THE RELATIVE IN RELIGION

IN the previous "Discussion in Theology," Dr. Kaplan pointed out that Prof. Guttman, at the Conference on Religion in Palestine, erred in "assuming that the distinction between absolute and relative is . . . a valid one." "Religion," Prof. Guttman had written, "means living *sub specie absoluti,* living in terms of the absolute, in contrast with living in terms of what is only relative." Dr. Kaplan did not develop the thought fully; he merely put his finger on the error.

Observers of our present world turmoil and confusion frequently ascribe all our troubles, as Prof. Guttman does, to what they call "moral relativism." The point they make is: we cannot expect to achieve peace, justice and freedom so long as we are not prepared to accept these ideals *absolutely.* There must be no if's or but's. What is right is right—and no exceptions made; and what is wrong is wrong—without exceptions too. Our whole trouble is that we imagine something can be right in one place and wrong in another; proper at one time and improper at another; good under certain circumstances and bad under other circumstances.

One can generate a good deal of righteous indignation when arguing along these lines. But an effective antidote to restore one's sobriety of mind is to recall the quiet liberalism of our ancestor Abraham when he pleaded courageously before the Judge of all the world (according to the Midrash) and cogently called His attention (*kav'yakol*) to the fact that absolutes in morality lead to trouble. He was defending the inhabitants of Sodom and said: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do justly? If Thou desirest the world to endure, there can be no absolute justice, while, if Thou desirest absolute justice, the world cannot endure. Yet Thou wouldst hold the cord by both ends, desiring both the world and absolute justice. Unless Thou foregoest a little, the world cannot endure."

What Abraham wanted, obviously, was that God should show mercy; and what is mercy but an acknowledgment that the strict application of a universal principle fails to take cognizance of the special circumstances surrounding a particular case? Mercy does not imply the condoning of a crime; it implies that more of the good can be gained by treating each case individually. Not only is mercy not harmful; on the contrary, absolute justice destroys the world.

When we observe, for example, the development of Jewish life during the last generation, we realize that a tremendous amount of defection from the ranks of Jewry came as a result of the absolutism of some sections of Orthodoxy. In my experience, at least, some of the most violent Jewish anti-Semites came from "strictly" pious homes; whereas the slightest display of liberalism on the part of an otherwise "old-fashioned" father evoked a love and loyalty which were touching.

In the realm of political life, the dogma of "absolute freedom" has almost wrecked the world. The *laissez-faire* attitude, which was so popular until our day, created such overwhelming anarchy that a reaction set in which plunged government

after government into the arms of absolutism, totalitarianism, strict discipline, in other words, bondage. Democratic governments were liberal and would frequently show mercy, while justice went begging; after the cataclysm, the fascist or communist government would exact a bloody "justice," and "mercy" fled from their vocabulary.

Events have begun to teach us that the concept of absolute peace is subject to the same laws of nature and human nature as are the concepts of freedom and justice. Those who contended that fighting was evil under any and all circumstances were apparently carried away by a lofty notion; but they failed to recognize that just such notions encourage the evil-doers to take the initiative.

No, it is not moral relativism which is at the root of all our trouble; more likely is it that our evils are evils of absolutism. What we suffer from, and what renders our relativism ineffective, is our lack of wisdom. Wisdom, in relation to questions of this sort, consists in knowing where to draw the line. There is no fixed point at which the line must be drawn. Events, circumstances, conditions help to determine where that point is. The wise man sees a situation in the light of the greatest number of its consequences, and on the basis of these, he learns where to draw the line between freedom and law, justice and mercy, persuasion and coercion.

The art of drawing the line at the proper place, the attainment of "wisdom," is, however, not an easy matter. It involves maintaining the balance between the "absolute" and the "relative"; that is, between a passionate devotion to ultimates and a realistic appreciation of circumstances. In all fairness, we must admit the converse of Abraham's proposition. Although justice without mercy is fatal, mercy without justice is equally so. Preoccupation with the immediate conditions may lead to forgetfulness of goal and purpose.

There is no longer any doubt that we are lost without our ultimates: truth, justice, peace, are absolutes. Prof. Guttman is not entirely wrong. We must live *"sub specie absoluti";* but the absolute must not be set up *against* the relative, in antagonistic juxtaposition. The relative and the absolute are not mutually contradictory. They are mutually supplementary, mutually enriching, and mutually indispensable. They represent a polarity which must be respected. Equilibrium between them must be established; but not as one compromises between right and wrong by a half-wrong. This is no middle-of-the-road philosophy. The absolute and the relative are equally valid, equally demanding. Both must be thoroughly reckoned with, and satisfied.

This may sound paradoxical; after all, one may ask, how can the absolute be called upon to reckon with any mere relative? Is it not the very essence of absolutism to stand above and beyond all considerations? To be sure, absolutes may stand aloof, but such aloofness will spell detachment from life, and sterility. No absolute can function in a vacuum. This is what happened, in fact, to philosophy and theology, when they became abstract and utterly absolute. They became the intellectual toys of sterile theology. Metaphysics became the plaything of professors. The common people were left without true religion.

If we hope to give religion back to the people, we shall have to reestablish the polarity of the absolute and the relative. We shall have to follow Dr. Kaplan's proposal, that we begin with those ultimates whose presence, or the promise of whose presence, in the world fills us with the conviction of life's worth. From that point on, we turn to life itself and draw from it the will to live and the hope of the full life.

IRA EISENSTEIN